

The California Community Colleges (CCC), Chancellor's Office was allocated MHSA funds to assist the CCC to meet the increased mental health needs of its students. These are critical needs, which are growing rapidly and present significant life and safety issues to individual students and the colleges. Research, which is strongly supported by information from the colleges, indicates that serious mental health problems are increasing for college students nationwide, including those attending the CCC. Student suicide rates have risen dramatically, and threatening and violent behavior is of increasing concern after campus incidents, such as the one at Virginia Technical University. Currently, campus health services, Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPBS), counseling, police and safety, other student service programs and faculty need support in addressing these increased needs.

CCC activities reported to DMH for the period 7/1/08 – 12/31/08 are as follows:

### **Summary of Major Activities**

- Mental Health (MH) Specialist appointment anticipated.
- Staff has regularly attended MHSA Interagency Partners meetings and has shared activities related to the colleges and the MHSA.
- The Board of Governors (BOG) of the California Community Colleges (CCCs), which is the governing body for the entire CCC system, hosted a presentation at its January 15, 2009 meeting on Mental Health Challenges and Opportunities, including the Student Mental Health Initiative (SMHI). The Student Services division, which is the focus of activity for the MHSA, assisted in coordinating this session, including identifying college staff with exemplary programs to address the BOG and its guests.
- In addition, the Student Services division facilitated a presentation at the BOG's November 3, 2008 meeting related to veterans attending the CCCs. This presentation highlighted veterans' MH issues, including those related to post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and offered best practices for addressing them from featured college representatives within our system. The CCCs continue efforts to better serve this group of college students, including the need to address their MH needs.
- The Dean of the Student Services division of the CCCs, which oversees the MHSA activities and staff of the Disabled Students Programs and Services (DSPS) unit, attended the strand at the annual conference of the California Association on Postsecondary Education and Disability in October, 2008, which also dealt with veterans' issues. A large part of the focus was the need to find methods for meeting MH needs of veterans attending college, especially those with PTSD. These methods require

both intra and inter-agency approaches and often need to be led by veterans emphasizing peer support.

- DSPS staff informed the representatives of the 110 CCCs at their October, 2008 DSPS Regional Coordinators meeting of activities related to the MOU between the CCCs and DMH in support of the goals of the MHSA, especially the SMHI and the approval of a Budget Change Proposal to hire an MH Specialist at the Chancellor's Office to lead this effort. The DSPS regional coordinators took this information to the 10 regional committees that they represent and disseminated the information to all of the 110 college DSPS coordinators in the months after the statewide representatives meeting. The group meets quarterly with upcoming meetings scheduled in February and April.
- In addition, the Dean and Vice Chancellor for Student Services provided updates to the Vice Presidents of Student Services for the 110 CCCs at their northern and southern regional meetings.
- DSPS staff also attends Health Services Association meetings to inform its regional representatives about the opportunities presented by the SMHI, and to increase college awareness of this grant opportunity beyond DSPS departments at local community colleges.
- DSPS also staffs the Governor's Prevention Advisory Committee and assists in disseminating information to local colleges regarding substance abuse prevention and co-occurring MH disorders on campus.
- The Chancellor's Office has continued to be actively engaged in outreach with MH partners, especially those in the CCC system. The DSPS Coordinator has established communication and coordination with the new leadership of the California Community College Mental Health and Wellness Association in the Bay Area, the Southern Community College Psychological Services Consortium at Long Beach City College and the Mental Health Education Consortium project in Los Angeles.
- Information was posted on the CCC website, providing outreach information on the Health Services Association of the California Community Colleges Conference to be held in March, 2009 in Riverside. The conference focuses almost entirely on MH issues of CCC students and is entitled, "The New Frontier of Student Health." It is anticipated that our new MH Specialist will attend this conference and report to the MHSA Interagency Partners' meeting on the sessions and discussions.
- Information was also posted on the CCC website about the California Strategic Plan on Suicide Prevention. A CCC representative served on the workgroup that wrote the plan.